



Padu Lampe is honored during Concierto Dominical at the Manchebo Beach Resort.

During a long holiday weekend of numerous events, likely the most jubilant was the concert conducted in the beachside “Chapel” of the Manchebo Resort on Sunday, April 29. The concerts are a monthly ritual, held every last Sunday of the month, but this past weekend it was “packed to the rafters” by those that came to enjoy the music of, and honor Aruba’s “Father of Culture,” composer, performer and artist, Juan Chabaya Lampe, better known as “Padu.” The co-composer of Aruba’s National Anthem with Rufo Wever celebrated his 87th birthday Thursday, April 26, and in the presence of his daughter Vivian, and his close friend Leo Booi, he was honored in concert with a forty-piece orchestra under the direction of Roy Sneek. This was a concert close to the hearts of many, especially Manchebo owner Ike Cohen.

A number of Aruba’s most popular singers of Padu’s music were present to pay tribute to the man for which they have so much affection. What would be considered an “All Star” bill in Aruba of singers included Tur, Erica Giel, Percy and Robert J’eandor, Nilka Franca, Gilbert Arends, Dayleen Dijkhoff, and Annette Wongsemito. They individually performed a medley of traditional popular tunes including waltzes, boleros and tumbas, and joined together with Robert J’eandor as lead to perform “Chanita.” This is lively number by Padu, which prompted him to lead his daughter to the stage and dance, as the audience clapped and sang along.

The affection and respect that the gathering felt for this icon of the island’s music was evident in the joyous celebration, with various individuals honoring him. Richard Harms took a turn at the microphone to extol Padu’s accomplishments and introduce a medley of songs that Padu authored with others or solo. Noted poetess Ruthy Vrieswijk-Bergen composed a poem to honor Padu, which graced each table. Noted composer and musician Eric F. Tchong presented to Padu his latest book, titled “Canastro Musical,” which is a compilation of containing music such as was heard that morning, and some works by Padu, also.

The was a wonderful day of music and nostalgia, ending with a rendition of “Happy Birthday” in several languages, by all the singers and the audience, and an expression of gratitude by Padu to all that participated, particularly his good friend and instigator of the event, Roy Sneek.